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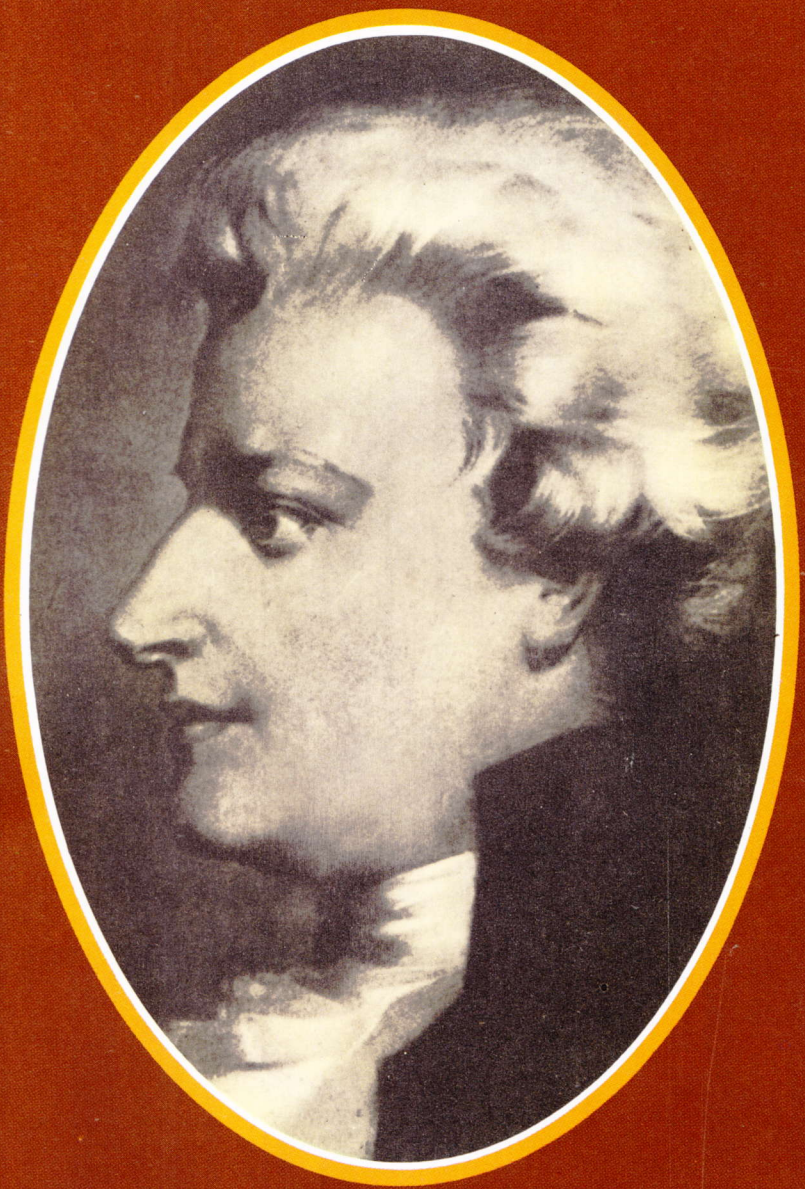
Great Men of Music



MOZART and his Music

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THE AUTHOR

Joan Swallow Reiter has been a member of the staff of TIME-LIFE Records since 1965. A classical and jazz pianist as well as a musicologist, she was an assistant editor of *The Story of Great Music* series and an editor and staff writer of the *As You Remember Them* and *The Swing Era* series.

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THE STORY OF GREAT MUSIC
CONCERTS OF GREAT MUSIC
TO THE MOON
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THE SWING ERA
RICHARD WAGNER: RING OF THE NIBELUNG
AS YOU REMEMBER THEM
GREAT MEN OF MUSIC

GREAT MEN OF MUSIC

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

BY JOAN SWALLOW REITER
AND THE EDITORS OF TIME-LIFE RECORDS

TIME-LIFE RECORDS NEW YORK

MOZART
MDCCLVI · MDCCXCI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

A Mechanism Divine

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is an awesome example of the twin miracle that occurs when a supreme talent is born at the right time and in the right place. The first miracle was his genius, so great that at times it seems almost superhuman, different not only in degree but in kind from that of other creative men. Mozart was perhaps the most musically gifted individual Western civilization has ever produced. For Mozart, music was a fourth dimension, a seamless extension of the natural world, as inevitable and necessary to him as the sea is to the dolphin, or the air to the eagle. He once described himself as "soaked in music...immersed in it all day long." He discovered this special world, his native element, while still a very small child, and his musical precocity made him the sensation of Europe.

Yet Mozart did not expend himself as a comet that blazes brightly and then falls dark. He grew to maturity as a genuinely great composer, one of the greatest of all. And that is because—the second part of Mozart's miracle—he was born into a highly musical age in which his wide-ranging genius could find the stimuli it needed to develop and flourish. To be sure, that age did not always value him as he deserved. Mozart's later years are a harrowing chronicle of official neglect and indifference, hectic scrambling for work, incessant worry over money and, finally, illness that cut his life brutally short at 35. Yet the conjunction of forces that produced this tragedy provided much of the impetus for a body of over 600 works, the best of them not just the consummate expression of classical style but among the most perfect creations in musical history.

In today's world, it sometimes takes a conscious effort of the imagination to recall that in the 18th Century all music was live. The traditional centers of musical patronage were still the royal courts and the nobility, for whom music constituted an essential ingredient of gracious living. Every royal figure was competent in music, sometimes even talented, and every self-respecting aristocrat had musicians on his staff just as he had cooks and clerks.

With this continuing, built-in demand for constantly fresh supplies of live music, 18th Century Europe teemed with musicians and composers. Financial security lay in finding a permanent, salaried position on the staff of some prince or other nobleman. There the musician-composer was typically a working artisan, turning out serenades and dances and cantatas for the consumption of his wealthy employer. In social standing he was little better than a servant. The most astonishing example of the musician's lowly status is Joseph Haydn, Mozart's older contemporary, who as music director to the Esterhazy princes of Hungary was required to wear his noble employers' livery.

Yet in the arts, as throughout 18th Century society, profound changes were coming. The rising middle class, increasingly well to do, had begun to adopt the cultural refinements of the aristocracy. Merchants and bankers cultivated music, bought instruments, gave their daughters lessons, commissioned works for special occasions. They subsidized public opera houses; they attended and supported public concerts. But while this new, expanding public gave the 18th Century composer an alternative outlet for his talents, it did not provide the security he would enjoy as the salaried member of a princely musical establishment. Commissions from wealthy patrons usually came one at a time.

Mozart is memorialized by this monument in Vienna's Burggarten, erected over a hundred years after the composer was buried in a common, unmarked grave.

There were no royalties; payment for an opera was usually on a single-fee basis. The only way for the freelance composer to survive was to turn out ever-new supplies of music, and to perform as much as possible.

Mozart's life as a musician-composer was played out in the vortex of these swirling historical currents. By nature he was totally unsuited to play the complaisant servant. His genius was too large, his temperament too proud for him to tolerate either the torpid musical life of his native Salzburg or the grudging patronage of an unappreciative prince-archbishop. The patron he yearned for, one who would give him personal security and creative freedom, never appeared. Ultimately, then, Mozart had open to him only the precarious route of freelancing. We owe his tremendous output not just to his creative fertility, but also to the harsh necessity of earning his daily bread.

Difficult as such an existence was, it had the effect of rooting his work firmly in human life and needs. Almost always, Mozart was writing for a specific occasion, and for the talents of specific musicians. An instrumental serenade, perhaps, to fete a bride on the eve of her wedding. Dances for the ballroom, certainly, and much music to eat dinner by. Noble masses to inspire the soul to worship. Operas for a festive secular mood. Ceremonial music to mark the installation of a new sovereign or the opening of a new Masonic lodge. Symphonies for the concert hall. Concertos and concert arias to display the brilliance of virtuosi. Simple keyboard works on which a young lady might perfect a slender talent, as well as chamber music for friends to play together at home on a *gemütlich* evening.

With accustomed composure and assurance, the six-year-old composer stands for his portrait in an elegant suit which was a gift from Empress Maria Theresa. Beside him is the piano on which he performed for her.

AT THE OPERATIC SUMMIT

The ultimate marvel of this large body of work lies not in its size, nor even in its variety, but in the number of times it reached the heights. Sir Thomas Beecham claimed that at least 250 of Mozart's works were "magnificent." In opera, Mozart's supreme love, the composer stands at the summit. "The highest of Mozart's ambitions and the surest of his gifts was for opera," writes Sacheverell Sitwell, and he goes on to credit Mozart with perfecting the arts of operatic ensemble writing and musical characterization. *Don Giovanni* (Side 1, Bands 1 and 2) is widely regarded as one of the greatest of all creative works. In *The Marriage of Figaro* (Side 1, Band 4), Mozart is the first to utilize the full operatic potential of the symphony orchestra. In *The Magic Flute* (Side 1, Band 3) and *Così fan tutte* (Side 8), he reveals himself as a master dramatist with a Shakespearean breadth of vision.

But Mozart is also a genius in the world of absolute music, where words fall away and the composer manipulates pure sound. A keyboard virtuoso, Mozart can be said to have devised the modern piano concerto. He carried the symphony to new levels of expressiveness. His best concertos for violin are a staple of every great violinist's repertory. His concerto for the clarinet (Side 7), an instrument still relatively new in the 18th Century, remains without parallel. His works for small instrumental combinations, such as string quartets, have prompted critic Eric Blom to write, "What domestic music-making would be like without Mozart's chamber music is hard to imagine."

The qualities that make Mozart's work, like the man himself, unique, are far from simple. The music is often youthfully buoyant and gay; it has a lightness, a felicity of expression, a melodiousness, a verve whose sole aim seems to be to charm. "Eternal sunshine in music, thy name is Mozart!" said Anton Rubinstein, the great 19th Century Russian pianist. Yet Mozart was far more than a rococo artist painting pretty surfaces. Even his most ingenuous works have a firmly controlled structure; he had an innate sense of form. To him we owe the perfection of 18th Century classical style which, in critic Charles Rosen's words, "still provides today a standard by which the rest of our musical experience is judged."

Simplicity, clarity, balance, symmetry—these are the hallmarks of musical classicism. In Mozart's mature works these are not bloodless virtues, but ways in which a dynamic material—the flow of live sound—is made to yield its meaning. Even with no stage in sight, he is a master of dramatic tension, with every melodic fragment contributing to a meaningful whole. What all this creates, at Mozart's sunniest period (which is to say, when he was very young), is a satisfying sense of order—order without stress, so supple and well-poised that it becomes elegance, a grace that glides on winged feet. When Mozart's art darkened, as his life darkened, the classical forms still served him; they continued to affirm order and balance, but now they reflected a profounder sense of the disorder and imbalance out of which

such affirmations may sometimes be summoned.

Gifts such as Mozart's cannot be inherited. Nevertheless he sprang from a highly musical family. His father, Leopold, was a talented violinist and composer in the employ of the Archbishop of Salzburg, who exercised civil as well as spiritual authority over the pretty Austrian town and surrounding countryside. A native of Bavaria, to the west, Leopold Mozart had come to Salzburg intending to study law, but music proved a stronger attraction. At 24, he entered the service of the Archbishop, playing in the court orchestra, and a few years later married Anna Maria Pertl, from a nearby town. Seven children were born to them, but only two survived infancy: Maria Anna, whom the family called Nannerl, and Wolfgang Amadeus, five years younger, born on January 27, 1756.

The family Mozart was by no means of social consequence in semifeudal Salzburg. Yet they lived comfortably enough. Leopold was strong, pious, hard-working—and a most exacting parent. But he was also thoughtful and loving. Mozart's mother, too, was devoted to her family, although she had a gayer, more pleasure-loving nature, which her son inherited.

Nannerl proved to be a bright, musical girl who profited from her father's lessons on the clavier. But what astonished the family was to see baby Wolferl, little more than a toddler, take an intense interest in his sister's musicmaking. He delightedly began to pick out thirds—simple chords—on the keyboard before he was three, and before he was four his father began to teach him. Soon he was composing little pieces of his own. A family friend recalled how he and Leopold returned from church one evening to find four-year-old Wolferl hard at work with pen and paper.

Leopold: "What's that you're doing?"

Wolfgang: "Writing a clavier concerto."

Leopold: "Let me see it."

Wolfgang: "I'm not finished yet."

Leopold: "Never mind, let me take a look. It must be something good."

Leopold and his friend chuckled as they glanced at the paper, which was covered with ink blots and smears from the child's unskilled pen. But Leopold stopped laughing as he looked more closely at the notes. "Look how correct and orderly it is," he said in amazement, "only it's so extraordinarily difficult, nobody in the world could play it." His small son at once interrupted, "That's why it's a concerto, it has to be practiced." And going to the keyboard, he tried to show them what he had in mind.

There are more wondrous stories, some no doubt exaggerated. A tale is told about how Wolfgang, aged six, received a tiny fiddle as a gift; one night when his elders were reading through a set of string trios, he played the second violin part without having had any instruction. At any rate, it was not long before Leopold concluded that he had fathered a genius; and, pious man that he was, not to say ambitious, he thenceforth consecrated his energies to nurturing this God-given wonder and exposing him to the world.

In another age, Leopold Mozart might have made a brilliant impresario. In February 1762 he resolved to take his two young prodigies on tour—for Nannerl, too, though no genius, was an extraordinarily talented performer. Within a few years, the two children were the talk of Europe.

TRAVELS OF A PRODIGY

Leopold began with a short, three-week visit to Munich, when Wolfgang was not quite six years old, and followed that with a three-and-a-half-month assault on Vienna itself, seat of the Holy Roman Empire.

News of the *Wunderkind* had preceded them, and they were swiftly invited to the palace, where Francis I and his empress, Maria Theresa, were charmed. "Their Majesties received us with such extraordinary graciousness," Leopold wrote home to a friend, "that when I tell it, people will say I have made it up. Suffice it to say that Wolferl jumped up on the Empress's lap, put his arms round her neck and kissed her heartily." Maria Theresa gave him a suit of court clothes made for the young Archduke Maximilian, one of her sons, and his portrait was painted in it.

Encouraged by their triumph in Vienna, Leopold made plans in the summer of 1763 for a much more extensive tour, one that would take the children to the distant cities of Paris and London. They would not be back in Salzburg for almost three years. Indeed, Mozart was to spend much of his childhood and youth touring—first as a prodigy on display, then as a young musician seeking a permanent post. In many ways it was a formidable existence. Travel by stagecoach could be arduous, and lodgings uncertain. Illness was a constant hazard, and medical care primitive. And always, money was a severe problem; finding patrons at each new stop along the way was essential, Leopold was extremely adept at encouraging important music lovers to introduce them and get them talked about. Next came invitations to perform at Court, or at the houses of the nobility. By custom, the host then rewarded the performers with a gift—a cash present, if the Mozarts were lucky, but all too often a gilt snuffbox or silver watch. Giving concerts on one's own could be more lucrative. Leopold developed a system. "Not a farthing is paid at the door," he explained in one of his letters home, "but whoever is without a ticket is not admitted, no matter who he is." His method was to have friends sell tickets a week in advance, and most of them he cunningly gave to the ladies—"who sell them the more easily."

With high hopes, Leopold and his brood arrived in Paris in November 1763. But it was a huge, expensive, unfamiliar city and even the resourceful Leopold at first made no headway. Then, with help from the Baron Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, a French literary figure who was German by birth, they gained the attention of the royal family. At a festive New Year's Day banquet at Versailles, Louis XV's queen kept little Wolfgang standing near her, chattering to him in German and interpreting his remarks to the King as she

Describing this charming portrait of the prodigious Mozart family, done by Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle during their five-month visit to Paris in 1764, Leopold Mozart wrote to a Salzburg friend: "Wolfgang plays the clavier. I stand behind and play the violin and Nannerl has one arm on the clavier and with the other holds the music as she sings."

THE FAMILY MOZART

Although the members of the Mozart household were often separated for months, even years at a time, they remained a deeply loving, close-knit family whose common devotion to music strengthened the bonds between them. They kept in touch with each other and with Salzburg friends through a torrent of letters—letters that were vitally important to young Wolfgang.

The rambunctious, irrepressible boy thrived on travel, and his frequent, excited letters were filled with awe at the world unfolding before him and with boyish delight at his musical triumphs. But news from home and loved ones gave a sense of order and continuity to his peripatetic life. Once, Leopold reported that his six-year-old son had awakened in Augsburg weeping with homesickness.

"On days when the German post comes, food and drink taste better to me," young Wolfgang confessed to his sister Nannerl. He unfailingly ended his letters to mother and sister with a flood of exuberant kisses —"a thousand," "10,000,000," "a billion." He sometimes indulged in boyish humor, giving a foretaste of the saltiness that was to become a hallmark of the youthful Mozart: "I am, God be thanked and praised, well and kiss my mother's hand and my sister's face, nose, mouth, throat, and backside, if it is clean."

Leopold Mozart

Anna Maria Mozart

Mozart was born on the third floor of a modest house much like those seen in this view of Salzburg. The quiet Austrian town has changed very little since the composer's day, and is the site each year of a music festival honoring its most famous son.

fed the boy tidbits from her plate. But when, on another occasion, Wolfgang played for Madame de Pompadour, the King's mistress, that very important lady did not respond quite as fully as he desired. "Who is this that won't kiss me?" he demanded indignantly of the onlookers. "My Empress kissed me!"

Mozart's musical knowledge and facility advanced with astonishing speed during the five-month stay in France. "Every day God performs fresh miracles through this child," wrote Leopold to a friend. With Baron von Grimm's help, the young Mozart's first published works, four sonatas for clavier with violin accompaniment, were engraved and printed in Paris at this time. "Picture to yourself the furor they will make in the world when people read on the title page that they have been composed by a seven-year-old child," continued Leopold in his letter, concluding: "We have built well, and now hope for a good harvest."

CONQUERING THE ENGLISH

The harvest was forthcoming. In London, their reception was so warm—and their various sponsors so generous—that the Mozarts stayed on for 15 months. Twice they were invited to Buckingham Palace, where they delighted George III and Queen Charlotte with their prodigious talents.

More important, young Wolfgang made two highly significant musical friendships in England. One was with Johann Christian Bach, youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach. Johann Christian had early left Germany for Italy, where he adopted the lighter and more lyrical Italian mode. Migrating to London, he became one of its leading musical figures, and was music master to the royal family. Mozart took to him at once, and was greatly influenced by his style. The story is told of how 29-year-old Christian Bach would seat the child on his knee at the keyboard, and the two would perform a sonata together with each player taking alternate bars—so perfectly, witnesses claimed, that it sounded as if one person alone were playing. Another vital association developed from a meeting with a famous opera singer, Giovanni Manzuoli. Leopold arranged for Wolfgang to take singing lessons from Manzuoli—not to turn him into a singer, but to increase his working knowledge of the vocal side of musical art.

It was in London as well that Wolfgang was subjected to one of the exacting tests that were continually demanded to prove his musical precocity. A scientifically minded gentleman, the Honorable Daines Barrington, made a careful examination of nine-year-old Wolfgang's powers, and published the results in *Philosophical Transactions*, a learned journal.

Barrington came to the session equipped with a five-part score which he knew beyond doubt the lad could never have laid eyes on. Mozart read off everything with perfect aplomb, then at Barrington's request extemporized an operatic love song to his own keyboard accompaniment. Next Barrington asked for an impromptu "Song of Rage" during which, he reported, the young performer "worked himself up to such a pitch that he beat his harpsichord like a person possessed, rising sometimes in his chair!" Barrington was much impressed with Mozart's powers of invention, and with his expert modulations from key to key. Wondering about the boy's true age, Barrington could not help noticing how childlike his behavior was. "Whilst he was playing to me a favorite cat came in, upon which he immediately left his harpsichord, nor could we bring him back for a considerable time."

Eventually, in July of 1765, the London sojourn came to an end; it was time to return home to Salzburg. Though the Archbishop was a tolerant patron, Leopold after all was his employee, and for months he had been absent. Also, while 10-year-old Wolfgang was progressing wonderfully well, he could profit from a quiet period of regular instruction, under Leopold's tutelage, in such traditional fundamentals of musical compositions as harmony and counterpoint. For two years Wolfgang pursued his studies, consolidating and honing his talents. But Leopold could not be satisfied in Salzburg. In the autumn of 1767 he bade farewell to the Archbishop, packed up his wife and children and set off again, this time on a 16-month visit to Vienna.

It was to prove a harrowing experience in every respect. No sooner had the Mozarts arrived than smallpox broke out in the city. Father and mother escaped. But the two children contracted the dread disease. Nannerl's case was apparenty light, Wolfgang's more severe. Were it not for a certain Count Podstatsky, who offered shelter and the best of care, the desperately sick youngster might well have died.

The family's musical fortunes fared hardly better. When Wolfgang recovered, Leopold attempted a daring stroke on behalf of his 12-year-old son. He obtained an opera commission from the new emperor, Joseph II, and Wolfgang was given a libretto called *La finta semplice* (The pretended innocent) for an Italian-style *opera buffa*, a kind of musical farce with a plot full of preposterous machinations. Musically, Mozart proved equal to the task. He composed a full-length score of 200 pages—26 vocal numbers joined by interludes of recitative. What the Mozarts could not handle was the frenetic, clique-ridden world of Viennese opera. Anxious to preserve their prerogatives against outsiders—particularly an upstart child—the city's musicians mounted a campaign against Mozart's opera. Eventually the impresario in charge refused to stage the work, and Emperor Joseph declined to intervene.

It was a bitter blow, perhaps more to the father than to the son. But Leopold was never down for long. Spurred on by this reverse in his fortunes, he set his sights on an even greater height for Wolfgang to conquer. Italy was the most musical country of all, the fount and shrine of opera. Aside from the intensity and profusion of its own musical life, it exported composers, singers and librettists to important positions all over Europe. Recognition as a master in Italy was a final accolade that Leopold craved for his son.

On their Italian journeys—there were to be three—father and son traveled alone. Nannerl's career was

over, now that she had outgrown any marketable precocity. Both she and her mother had to read about the adventures of the vagabonding Mozarts.

Wolfgang, 13, was afire with excitement as they set off in December of 1769. "Dearest Mamma!" he begins a postscript to Leopold's letter en route. "My heart is completely enchanted with all these pleasures, because it is so jolly on this journey, and so warm in the carriage, and because our coachman is a fine fellow who drives like the wind whenever the road gives him the slightest chance."

Italy met his ardor with a warm response. In Milan, Bologna and Naples his harpsichord performances were hailed with cheers. Rome was the scene of a stunning musical tour de force. The Mozarts arrived at Eastertide, in time to be present in the Sistine Chapel for the yearly performances of Allegri's *Miserere*, a complex choral work for four soloists and a five-part chorus. So jealous was the Vatican of this musical treasure that it allowed no copies to circulate. Chapel musicians were threatened with excommunication if they disobeyed this strict rule. But Wolfgang after one hearing was able to write the entire nine-part work from memory. When word leaked out, it caused a sensation. Eveveryone was dumbfounded except, apparently, the genius himself, who neglected to mention it in his letters to his mother. He did report about this time, as he signed off, that "I have had the honor of kissing St. Peter's foot in St. Peter's church and as I have the misfortune to be so small, I, that same old dunce,

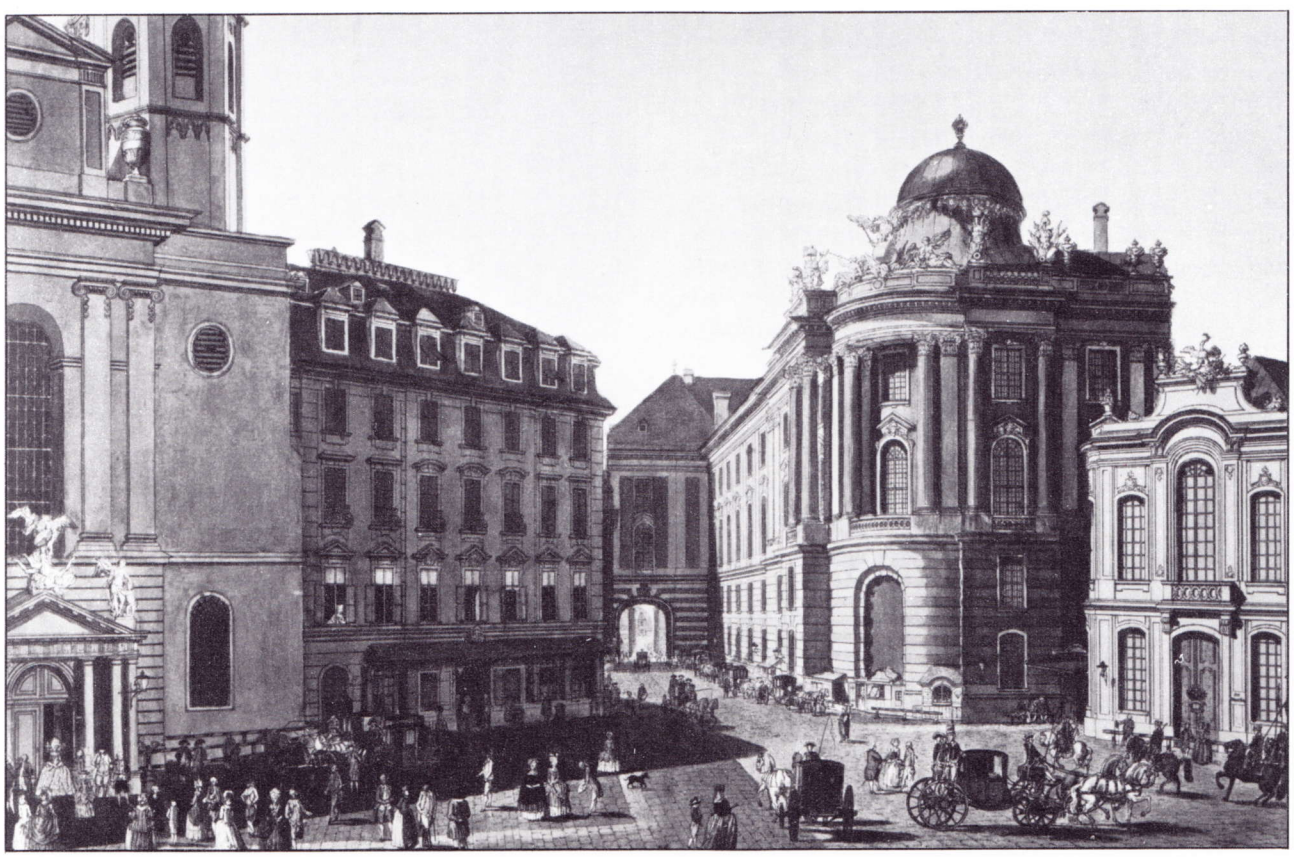
WOLFGANG MOZART,

had to be lifted up."

Undeterred—perhaps impressed—by this episode of innocent plagiarism, Pope Clement XIV conferred on Wolfgang the Order of the Golden Spur, which entitled the youngster to be called "the Chevalier de Mozart." In Bologna, then a famous center of learning, he was examined for admission to the Accademia Filarmonica, a highly prestigious musical society, and passed easily. Yet another feather for his cap came in Milan, where he was commissioned to write an opera. It was an *opera seria*, or serious opera, on the rather ponderous classical subject of Mithridates, King of Pontus. On opening night, with the 14-year-old Mozart himself presiding from the keyboard, the discriminating Milanese audience shouted "Evviva il maestrino!"—"Long live the little maestro!"

Such was the triumph that Mozart was awarded a further commission for Milan. It brought him back to Italy the following autumn, 1771, to write an operatic entertainment, or "serenata" *(Ascanio in Alba)*, for a royal wedding; one of its pleasures was that his London friend, Manzuoli, sang the principal role. It was a pronounced success, as was his opera *Lucio Silla*, which he wrote in Milan on a third tour, a year later, for presentation during the carnival season.

But now a distressing event occurred in Salzburg, something that would crucially affect Mozart's future. The old Archbishop, Sigismund von Schrattenbach, died in December of 1771, and Hieronymus, Count von Colloredo, assumed the archiepiscopal throne. The first prelate had on the whole been indulgent to father and son—granting leaves of absence and agreeing to extensions. Toward his successor, however, Mozart



This was Vienna's Michaelerplatz, as Mozart knew it in 1783. His "Seraglio," "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Cosi fan tutte" all had premieres at the Burgtheater at far right.

in time developed such resentment, such a sense that he was being unjustly neglected, that history has cast Hieronymus as the blackest of villains. This may be unfair. Both Mozarts were proud, restless for recognition, and contemptuous of the mediocrity of Salzburg music. The Archbishop could not fail to sense this and react accordingly.

The next four years in Salzburg were exceedingly difficult. Mozart composed ceaselessly, both for the Archbishop and as a freelance. The chamber and church music he wrote to order embraced masses, organ sonatas, serenades and divertimentos, keyboard concertos and four-hand music. In 1775, in a burst of creative growth, he wrote five brilliant concertos for violin. With their wealth of melody, elegance of phrase and subtle nuance of orchestral color, they provide the solo instrumentalist with some of his most rewarding vehicles—not of mere virtuoso display for its own sake, but of a harmoniously balanced beauty.

But all the while Mozart father and son chafed at the limited horizons of Salzburg—and the lack of appreciation, both artistic and financial. Finally, in March of 1777, the Mozarts once more applied for leave of absence. At first the Archbishop ignored the request; when it was renewed, he curtly refused to sanction what he scornfully termed "begging expeditions."

The only course open was for Wolfgang to ask for his discharge. His application reminded His Grace with ill-concealed sarcasm that the prelate had once "graciously declared that I had nothing to hope for in Salzburg and would do better to seek my fortune elsewhere." After some anxious moments, the request was agreed to, and in late September of 1777 young Mozart set off from home once more. Leopold had no choice but to stay behind; Nannerl remained to look after him. It was Frau Mozart who accompanied the exuberant Wolfgang on this, his final tour.

For 21-year-old Wolfgang, golden freedom beckoned. No more Archbishop and—though he was a most filial and loving son—no more Papa! But almost at once he was subjected to a humbling disappointment. On a previous Mozart visit to Munich, the ruling Elector had waxed ecstatic about the young man's music, and now the composer expected to secure a position in his establishment. Alas, the Elector seemed to have forgotten, and he failed to leap at the chance to have the young Salzburg wonder in his employ. "Yes, my dear fellow," said he when Wolfgang appealed to him point-blank, "but there is no vacancy."

At Augsburg, the proud ex-prodigy was further annoyed when some young louts at a dinner made fun of the decoration on his chest, the Golden Spur awarded him by the Pope. Ever sensitive about his short stature, Mozart wrote home about this time, "They probably think because I am little and young, nothing great or mature can come out of me." But his sunny nature was always quick to assert itself, and there were too many new things to experience for him to remain gloomy for long.

In Augsburg Mozart called on the well-known instrument maker Johann Andreas Stein, and was greatly excited by the high quality of Stein's pianofortes; their remarkable evenness of tone and superior damping made them the best such instruments he had yet encountered. Mozart already preferred the piano to its predecessors, the clavichord and the harpsichord, and he played a large role in establishing its ascendancy. Though the pianoforte had been invented around 1709 by Bartolommeo Cristofori, it did not begin to come into its own until Mozart adopted it as his chosen instrument and evolved a style of performance and composition quite different from anything of which the clavichord and the harpsichord were capable.

A DELIGHT IN WOODWINDS

Another instructive experience awaited Mozart in Mannheim, which was then a famous musical center boasting what many claimed to be the best orchestra in Europe: "an army of generals," said one admirer. Its musicians were renowned for the precision and unity of their playing. Mozart was much taken with the way the woodwinds were used. "You cannot imagine the glorious effect of a symphony with flutes, oboes, and clarinets," he wrote home to Leopold.

He made friends with the orchestra players, concertized, wrote music, and as usual jockeyed for a permanent appointment in the employ of some wealthy patron. But nothing jelled. Finally a plan was concocted that would take Wolfgang on to Paris. Then, without warning, came a thunderclap.

Wolfgang wrote home to his father that he was not going to Paris after all. Instead he proposed that he should travel to Italy with some new friends, the Webers. There he would make everybody's fortune by writing operas to help launch the career of an exquisite singer, certain to create a sensation: 15-year-old Aloysia Weber. Mozart had fallen in love.

Fridolin Weber, head of the family, scratched out a living for his wife and large family as a copyist and prompter for the Mannheim opera. He was precisely the sort of poor, knockabout musician Leopold was always warning Wolfgang against. By return mail, Leopold poured out his "amazement and horror" in page after page of anguished remonstrance and appeal: "It now depends on your good sense...whether you die as a great Kapellmeister of whom posterity will read, or whether, captured by some woman, you die bedded of straw in an attic full of starving children." Even at a distance, the ties to father were stronger than young love. Responded a sobered Wolfgang: "In the intoxication of the moment I forgot how impossible it is at present to carry out my plan." He abandoned his foolish dream, bade a sad farewell to the Webers, and on March 14, 1778 left for France with his mother.

"Off with you to Paris," Leopold had urged. "There the nobility treat men of genius with the greatest deference, esteem and courtesy." But this time in Paris, as in Munich, Augsburg and Mannheim, Wolfgang was due to be disappointed. Perhaps he was a bit spoiled by the earlier adulation, but he now discovered that

"Black eyes and a pretty figure" said Mozart of his cherished Constanze, then just 19. This portrait bears him out.

Karl Thomas and Franz-Xaver, shown here at 14 and six, were Mozart's only children to survive infancy.

the people who had once fussed over a seven-year-old child wonder were considerably less interested in a struggling 22-year-old musician, even though they might acknowledge his talent. "People pay you plenty of compliments, but there it ends," he complained to his father. "I play, and they say 'C'est un progide, c'est inconcevable, c'est étonnant' and then, 'Adieu!'"

He scrambled about getting commissions, taking pupils, making music with some of his Mannheim friends now in Paris. A symphony (the *Paris)* was well received, and he composed some of his most attractive piano sonatas at this time. Written in response to his father's suggestion that he adopt a "more popular" style, they were light and graceful, and so delightfully easy to play that they have become a staple of every embryo pianist's repertory. Yet after three months in Paris, Wolfgang had found only one prospect of any consequence—as organist in the royal court at Versailles. Father Leopold urged him to accept; Wolfgang refused because he felt that it would tie him down and consign him to oblivion. And now his depression was joined by grief. His mother had taken ill with a malady that neither poultices nor prayers could seem to cure. For four weeks the illness ran its course, and finally, on July 3, 1778, Frau Mozart died. As gently as possible, Wolfgang broke the news to his father in Salzburg.

The next several months were unhappy ones for the young Mozart. If anything, Paris was proving a more difficult place to make a living than Germany. Leopold's letters increasingly urged him to return home. Hieronymus needed an organist and assistant conductor and was willing to employ Wolfgang, even to allow him an occasional leave. At last, Wolfgang yielded —but with reluctance and a sense of humiliation.

Indeed, no sooner had Wolfgang returned to Salzburg in December than he felt all the old resentment and hostility toward the Archbishop. Were he not so desperately in need of a financial base, he undoubtedly would have left immediately. As it was, he stuck it out for more than two years. What triggered the final explosion was the proud Mozart's inability to play the lackey. In late 1780 he received a commission to compose an *opera seria* for the Munich carnival season of 1781. The result, *Idomeneo,* is the first of Mozart's mature works in this form, and it won general acclaim in Munich for its brilliant instrumentation and dramatic intensity. It was all the more galling, then, to be summoned shortly thereafter to Vienna, where the Archbishop was making a formal visit and wished to have his principal musicians in attendance.

In a letter to his father, Mozart described bitterly how "my insignificant self" had to eat with the servants. "The two valets sit at the top of the table, but at least I have the honor of being placed above the cooks." Fresh insult occurred when the Archbishop forbade Mozart to play for a fashionable benefit concert. Finally the Archbishop ordered Wolfgang home to Salzburg; in the ugly confrontations that followed, Mozart was physically booted out of an anteroom by the Archbishop's chief steward.

Mozart was now 25. He left Salzburg, never to return

except for a brief family visit. Henceforth he would live and work in Vienna, entirely on his own.

That fact concerned his father greatly. Leopold had always regarded his son as an innocent. Imagine his consternation when he learned that in Vienna Wolfgang was living with the Webers of earlier Mannheim association. Aloysia sang for the opera and had married an actor. Fridolin Weber was dead; his widow kept the family afloat by taking in lodgers. Frau Weber's house was apparently a rather Bohemian institution, the lady herself something of a tippler and not above scheming to marry off her numerous daughters. Or so Leopold Mozart decided when gossip reached him in Salzburg linking Wolfgang and Constanze Weber, one of Aloysia's younger sisters.

Responding to his father's nagging, Wolfgang grudgingly moved to different quarters, though claiming complete innocence. But a few months later he confessed to his father that he loved Constanze and wanted to marry her. As a matter of fact, he went on—here poor Mozart's courtship reads like a stage farce—under duress from Constanze's mother he had signed an agreement either to marry the girl or to pay her an annuity of 300 gulden. But Constanze, he reported with pride, had then torn the agreement up! Leopold greeted this bit of intelligence with dismay. For months he withheld his consent to the marriage, fulminating against unscrupulous "seducers of youth!" But he was forced to accept a *fait accompli*: 26-year-old Wolfgang and 19-year-old Constanze were wed in August 1782.

Constanze was probably not the best of all wives for young Mozart. She has been much criticized as a frivolous and shallow girl, no better than Mozart at the management of a household. During most of their nine years together she was either pregnant (the couple had six children, of whom two boys, Karl Thomas and Franz-Xaver, survived to adulthood) or else recovering from difficult confinements. But she had musical talent, like many of her family (her two older sisters became leading prima donnas, and the composer Karl Maria von Weber was her cousin); when a Mozart mass was performed at Salzburg during the couple's visit there, she sang the soprano part. And if Mozart's home was less than a haven of tranquillity, he retained a lover's fondness for his "Stanzerl" to the end.

The summer of 1782 was a happy one for another reason. July had seen the triumph of his comic opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (its heroine was named Constanze), performed in Vienna's Burgtheater under the Emperor's patronage and in his presence. Later that same year, Mozart began work on six string quartets that are among his finest works; they were the fruit of his admiration for Haydn's achievements in that form. The friendship of these two composers provides some of the brightest moments in Mozart's biography. Joseph Haydn was a generation older than Wolfgang, and just beginning to win the fame he deserved. As music director for the Esterhazy princes, he spent much of his time in the country, and traveled to Vienna with his employers only on occa-

sion. But now that Mozart lived in the capital city, the two at last met, and a deep mutual regard developed.

How Mozart felt can be judged from the letter in which he dedicated the quartets to Haydn: "A father who decided to send his sons out into the world thought it best to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a famous man, who fortunately was also his best friend. Just so, my famous and very dear friend, I send my six sons to you." Haydn for his part assured Leopold Mozart, when the latter was in Vienna for a 1785 visit, "Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name."

During the years 1784 and 1785, Mozart became the most popular keyboard virtuoso in Vienna. In a five-week period in the spring of 1784, he had no fewer than 22 engagements. The majority were private concerts given by one or another of the city's music-loving aristocrats for their guests; a few were organized by Mozart himself on a subscription basis. Some of Mozart's most beautiful piano concertos were hastily composed for these affairs, often under great pressure, since in addition to writing and performing, he gave his mornings to teaching. It would sometimes happen that, in the desperate rush to get the score copied in time, he had to carry the piano part in his head—a feat that would seem miraculous in anyone but Mozart.

For once he had enough money to live decently. No doubt it afforded Wolfgang and Constanze considerable satisfaction to display their prosperity, temporary as it was, when Leopold came to visit in 1785. The elder Mozart reported to his daughter Nannerl (now married to a widower with five children) that the household was in a constant whirl of activity. "We never get to bed before one o'clock. Every day there are concerts, and the whole time is given up to teaching, music, composing and so forth. Since my arrival your brother's fortepiano had been taken at least a dozen times to the theater or to some other house."

Now the masterpieces came crowding fast. A historic collaboration began in 1785 when Mozart asked Lorenzo da Ponte to adapt Beaumarchais' play *The Marriage of Figaro* for an opera. Da Ponte was by birth an Italian Jew, by conversion a Catholic and a priest, and by character an adventurer somewhat in the mold of his compatriot Casanova. Arriving in Vienna in 1783, Da Ponte had ingratiated himself with the Emperor. He was poet and librettist at the Italian theater, and had already provided librettos for two operas.

Da Ponte agreed to Mozart's request but realized the Emperor's permission would be needed, and successfully undertook to get it. The audacious Beaumarchais play, in which Figaro, the valet, hoodwinks his employer, the Count, had been banned in Vienna because much of its dialogue was far too revolutionary for a weakening aristocracy to stomach. For the opera, troublesome political dialogue was removed, and Mozart provided some of the most lyrical, incandescent music and sensitive musical characterization ever written. At its premiere on May 1, 1786, *Figaro* triumphed. Aria

THE MOODS OF MOZART: SCENES FROM THREE MASTERFUL OPERAS

"The Marriage of Figaro" (top right) is an operatic comedy of manners that Mozart's music imbues with the full range of human emotion. This scene from a Metropolitan Opera production shows the principals in a confrontation over their various intrigues.

The tragicomedy "Don Giovanni" (lower right) was the ultimate vehicle for a display of Mozart's ability to juxtapose the sweet with the bitter. Here in the Met production, Don Giovanni is seen carousing even as his doom draws near.

"The Magic Flute" (left) allowed Mozart to weave a complex tapestry combining popular music with exotic themes. In the finale of this Met production, the hero is seen united with the heroine while a chorus exults over the triumph of virtue.

after aria was encored; singers, orchestra, and audience together called the composer to the stage repeatedly at the conclusion. Figaro's aria "Non più andrai" became the popular hit tune of the day.

In December *Figaro* was produced in Prague, whose discerning music lovers have won a special niche in history for the warmth with which they recognized and honored Mozart's genius. *Figaro* was quickly a raging success, and Wolfgang and Constanze were bidden to Prague to receive the city's applause in person. "Here they talk about nothing but *Figaro*," Mozart wrote happily back to Vienna. "Nothing is played, sung or whistled but *Figaro*."

THE TALE OF DON JUAN

Before leaving the city he received a commission for a new opera, to be given later in the year. Again he collaborated with Lorenzo da Ponte. They decided to use the old tale of Don Juan, or Don Giovanni, the libertine whose villainies are finally punished in hell. Mozart called *Don Giovanni* a *dramma giocosa*, a tragicomedy, suggesting that its blending of light and darkness, its penetration of the complex good and evil within human character, constituted something novel. There was amusing buffoonery still, but there were also deeper, more somber notes.

Wolfgang returned to Prague with Constanze in September 1787 to ready the opera for its October 29 premiere. Last-minute demands from singers always created problems. Mozart supposedly rewrote one aria five times before it was acceptable to his Don Giovanni. The opera's overture was not committed to paper until the night before the final rehearsal—or, in some versions of the story, the night before the premiere. With that awesome power that he demonstrated all his life, Mozart had the music worked out in his head and simply needed to write it down.

If Mozart had doubts about the reception of this more profound work, they melted away as the Praguers demonstrated a rapturous enthusiasm. Possibly as a result, Mozart's stock appeared to rise a trifle in Vienna. He received an appointment as court musician and composer to the Emperor. But the work demanded was slight, and the salary equally low. "Too much for what I do," the ever-proud Mozart wrote on one of his pay receipts, "too little for what I could do."

Apart from this he had no fixed income, and despite his triumphs money remained a problem. Since there were no royalties in those days, a composer was only as well off as his next concert or commission, which in any event was all too often ill-paying.

Soon began a pathetic series of begging letters from Mozart to a wealthy friend, Michael Puchberg. One in June 1788 pleads: "I beg you to lend me until tomorrow at least a couple of hundred gulden, for my landlord in the Landstrasse has been so importunate that in order to avoid an unpleasant incident I have had to pay him on the spot, and this has made things very awkward for me!" Puchberg sent the 200 gulden. Ten days later Mozart had to write, "I am obliged to tell you frankly that it is impossible for me to pay back so soon the money you have lent me and I must beg you to be patient with me!" So it would continue.

Meanwhile Mozart was turning out music with his usual facility, at an incredible pace, and under what should have been crushing pressure. Between the opening of *Don Giovanni*, in October 1787, and the production of his next opera, *Così fan tutte*, in January 1790, he wrote more than 60 works. Most remarkable of all are the three superlative symphonies, No. 39 (Side 4), No. 40 and No. 41. They were his last in this form, and he composed them within the short space of three months in the summer of 1788—the very summer of those pressing worries related in his letters to Puchberg. The three symphonies are often described as a trilogy, and indeed they form a natural trio, embracing the whole range of Mozart's mature mastery in orchestral writing. The first sets a scene of poetic beauty; the second moves to a mood of somber yet exalted passion; the third expresses a magisterial nobility. If he had never written anything else, these symphonies would guarantee him immortality.

People were wrong, Mozart once told a friend, who assumed from the ease and speed with which he wrote that his art came easily. "I assure you," he said, "nobody has devoted so much time and thought to composition as I. There is no famous master whose music I have not industriously studied through many times." During his Vienna years he had increasing opportunity to become better acquainted with the music of Handel and J. S. Bach. This was owing to the passion for those two composers of a wealthy Viennese, Baron van Swieten, who commissioned Mozart to arrange Handel and Bach works for musicales at his house.

A successful revival of *Figaro* in Vienna in August 1789 reminded the Emperor of Mozart's existence, and led to a commission for another opera. The libretto, this time an original story, was again supplied by Lorenzo da Ponte. *Così fan tutte* (colloquially, "Women are like that") is a frothy *opera buffa* in which two lovers, goaded by a cynical old bachelor, agree to test the fidelity of their fiancées by wooing them in disguise —alas, all too successfully. Mozart's charming music so enhanced the slender plot that it has won a permanent place in opera repertory. Its initial run was curtailed, however, when soon after its premiere Emperor Joseph II died and all theaters closed in mourning.

Mozart was now 35, approaching middle age, and he had little to show for it. Artistic success and popular esteem, yes; but money, comfort, the good Viennese life —hardly any of that. The freelancer's road was exceedingly hard, and all his commissions and concerts barely brought him enough to keep a roof over his family's head. His letters to Puchberg became ever more pitiable; to that gentleman's credit, he never failed to respond. Mozart's desperation must have increased when the new emperor, Leopold II, took no notice of his overtures, and indeed failed to include Mozart in his musical entourage when he went to Frankfurt in the autumn of 1790 to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor.

The mature Mozart was the subject of this poignant portrait by his brother-in-law, Joseph Lange. It may have remained unfinished because of Mozart's death in 1791, but no one is sure: its date is in dispute.

On an impulse, Mozart pawned his household's silver plate and went off to Frankfurt on his own, hoping to earn some money amid the general festivity by giving a concert. The concert was a *succès d'estime*, but it failed to make a profit. Mozart's letters to Constanze at this time, full of homesickness, affectionate raillery and dogged encouragement, are extremely touching. ("P.S. While I was writing the last page, tear after tear fell on the paper. But now I must cheer up—Catch! An astonishing number of kisses are flying about—the deuce! I see a crowd of them. Ha! ha! I have just caught three—they were delicious!") When he got back to Vienna, they moved to cheaper lodgings; it was his twelfth home in Vienna in nine years, and it would be his last.

The following spring, an actor and impresario named Emanuel Schickaneder, whom Mozart had met in Salzburg years before, suggested that they collaborate on an opera for Schickaneder's theater. The plot was based partly on a fairy tale about a birdcatcher and a magic flute, and partly on the rituals and symbols of the Masonic brotherhood to which both men belonged. When Constanze, who was pregnant once more and ailing, went off to the spa at Baden, Mozart spent his summer days working on *The Magic Flute* in a garden house Schickaneder provided near the theater. The nights, according to gossip, he and Schickaneder and the company devoted to roistering—a charge that was probably true, given Mozart's lifelong need for sympathetic company. How sick at heart he really felt emerges from his letters to Constanze. "I can't describe what I have been feeling—a kind of emptiness that hurts me dreadfully—a kind of longing that never ceases, and that persists, nay rather increases daily."

It was in just such a susceptible mood that he received one day a visit from a mysterious stranger clothed all in gray, who refused to identify himself. The man offered Mozart a handsome sum for a requiem mass, to be composed in secret and turned over to the messenger without its authorship ever being revealed. Mozart accepted, but the rather sinister circumstances preyed on his mind as he set his imagination working on the theme of death. (In fact, the stranger was no supernatural apparition but the steward of a certain Count Walsegg, who liked to pass himself off as a composer and intended to claim the requiem as his memorial to the late Countess Walsegg.)

Mozart's work on the mass was interrupted by a commission from his old admirers in Prague, who wanted an opera written immediately for Leopold II's coronation as King of Bohemia. As Mozart and Constanze, safely delivered of a boy and home again, were setting off on their journey to Prague, the figure in gray reappeared to ask: "And the requiem? What about the requiem?" In a frenzy of effort, Mozart finished his opera for Prague, *La Clemenza di Tito*, in 18 days, scribbling in carriages and working late at night in the inns. He was already quite unwell, and the unenthusiastic reception of the opera disheartened him further.

In Vienna he resumed feverish work on the *Requiem*, increasingly convinced that it was his own requiem he was writing. Meanwhile *The Magic Flute*, whose premiere late in September Mozart had conducted himself from the keyboard, was turning into a popular hit. When he became so ill in mid-November that he had to take to his bed, Mozart would put his watch beside him each evening and follow the progress of the opera in his imagination, humming the melodies. On his last day, he asked some friends to help him sing the score of the unfinished *Requiem*; but at the *Lachrimosa* he broke down, weeping, and could not continue.

He died a few minutes after the midnight of December 5, 1791, two months shy of his thirty-sixth birthday, of what doctors believe was nephritis, or acute kidney inflammation.

Constanze collapsed at his death, and friends had to take care of the funeral and burial. In a gesture of economy, Mozart was given a "third class" service and his body interred in a common grave in Vienna's St. Mark's Cemetery. A handful of friends attended the funeral service, but because of bad weather no one accompanied Mozart's coffin to its final resting place; when Constanze was able to visit the cemetery, no one could tell her where he lay. The exact location is unknown to this day. In truth Mozart's monument is elsewhere. All his life, through every difficulty, he had ceaselessly gone on creating, like some divine mechanism set into motion by forces beyond the limits of his existence. Music had been his purpose, and while life lasted he fulfilled it utterly.

A Listener's Guide to the Recordings

● SIDE ONE

"Don Giovanni," K. 527*
Band 1/Overture (5:49)
Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Fritz Reiner, conductor
Band 2/Act 1—Recitative: "Don Ottavio, son morta!"
Aria: "Or sai chi l'onore" (6:10)
Leontyne Price, soprano; Piero de Palma, tenor;
RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra;
Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

For the past 200 years *Don Giovanni* has served musicologists as a perfect example of Mozart's genius as a composer of opera, and every music lover has found it a source of continuous joy and wonderment. For the romantic writer E. T. A. Hoffman this opera marked the beginning of the romantic movement. For Balzac it was proof positive of the dramatic power of music. To Bernard Shaw, Don Giovanni was "the first Byronic hero in music."

Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart's great collaborator, based his libretto on the familiar Spanish legend of Don Juan. Da Ponte's version gives us a dashing and unrepentant lady-killer who has seduced women in epic numbers (in Spain alone, as his servant reminds us, "mille e tre!"—"a thousand and three"). At the beginning of the opera, Giovanni makes an attempt on the virtue of a noble lady, Donna Anna, and when her father, the Commendatore, intervenes, Giovanni kills him in a swordfight. Giovanni makes his escape, and is soon embroiled in other affairs. Although Anna and her betrothed, Don Ottavio, swear to track down the miscreant, the dissolute cavalier is eventually punished not by mortal hand but through the agency of "the stone guest"—a statue of the murdered Commendatore. Don Giovanni comes upon the Commendatore's statue in a cemetery and when the stone figure calls out to him, Giovanni recklessly invites it to supper. The statue agrees, and when it arrives at the supper demands that Giovanni mend his evil ways. But he refuses; the ground opens under his feet and he descends into the fires of hell.

Band 1. Mozart begins his overture to the opera with an "andante" whose ominous D-minor chords foreshadow the bad end to which Don Giovanni will come. But then, as if to remind his listeners that his work is basically a comedy rather than an *opera seria*, Mozart modulates from minor into major and commences an exuberantly elegant "molto allegro" punctuated with trumpets and drums. The impassioned energy of this music moved the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard to write this ecstatic description of it: "Hear these light, dancing violin notes, hear the beckoning of pleasure, hear the shouts of joy. Hear his wild chase, how he overtakes himself, always faster, and more indomitable, hear the uncontrolled desire of passion, the roar of love, the whisper of temptation, the whirl of seduction, hear the stillness of the moment—hear, hear, oh hear Mozart's *Don Giovanni!*"

Band 2. In this scene from Act I, Donna Anna first realizes that Don Giovanni is the man who in the darkness attempted to seduce her and is her father's murderer. The recitative and aria in which she confides her thoughts to the attentive (but timid) Ottavio is one of the dramatic high points of the opera. The recitative begins with tremendous orchestral eruptions that reflect Donna Anna's horror at her discovery ("Don Ottavio, son morta!"). The accompaniment quiets down as she begins her hushed description of Giovanni's attempted seduction ("Era già alquanto avanzata la notte") but grows increasingly vehement as her agitation mounts. In the aria that follows ("Or sai chi l'onore") she calls on Ottavio to assist her in wreaking vengeance: a great outburst of fury and indignation, which Mozart, with his typical economy of means, underscores with an orchestra consisting only of oboes, bassoons, horns and strings.

"The Magic Flute," K. 620
Band 3/Act 2—Aria: "Ach, ich fühl's" (4:17)
Leontyne Price, soprano; New Philharmonia Orchestra of London; Peter Herman Adler, conductor

Composed in 1791, Mozart's last year of life, *The Magic Flute* has a libretto, by Emanuel Schikaneder, that manages to combine folk-comedy and quasi-religious ritual in an almost surrealist fantasy. One of the opera's major themes is the bewitching power of music: the hero, Tamino, is armed with

* The "K" numbers that appear on each of Mozart's works as a means of identification, were assigned by Ludwig Köchel, the 19th Century Austrian music bibliographer and naturalist who compiled the first chronological, thematic catalogue of the composer's works in 1862.

a magic flute that triumphs over evil and helps him win the heroine, Pamina. But before Tamino can marry her, he must undergo a series of trials, one of which is the ordeal of silence. Pamina misinterprets his silence as a rebuff and gives voice to her heartbreak in the aria, "Ach, ich fühl's." "Ah, I feel it: the happiness of love has vanished forever...Tamino, see, these tears are flowing for you alone: if you do not feel the longing of love, peace can come only with dying." Writes the critic Spike Hughes: "This aria, with its inspired orchestral reticence (one flute, one oboe, one bassoon, strings) is an almost unbearable outpouring of grief, in which the final expression of Pamina's suicidal despair reaches its climax not in the voice but in an orchestral postlude of barely three bars all told. Suddenly, it seems, Mozart feels there are emotions too deep for words, too harrowing for the human voice."

"The Marriage of Figaro," K. 492
Band 4/Act 3—Recitative: "E Susanna non vien!"
Aria: "Dove sono" (6:10)
Leontyne Price, soprano; RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra;
Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

Beaumarchais' *The Marriage of Figaro*, the basis of the Mozart-Da Ponte opera, had the temerity to suggest that servants could outsmart their aristocratic employers at their own game. The plot revolves around the Count Almaviva's sly but bungling efforts to seduce Susanna, the vivacious bride-to-be of his factotum, Figaro. The Count's machinations are ultimately foiled, thanks to Figaro's cunning, Susanna's adroitness, and the ingenuity of His Excellency's long-suffering wife, the Countess Almaviva, who exchanges clothes with Susanna in a daring ruse to win back her husband's affection. This scene from Act 3 begins with her recitative, "E Susanna non vien!" ("And Susanna doesn't come!") as she calculates the risks she is running in trying to trick a husband "si vivace e geloso" ("so headstrong and jealous"). Yet she must take the risk, for after first having been loved—"prima amata"—she has now been insulted and betrayed. The great aria "Dove sono" that follows poignantly sums up the sufferings of a neglected wife: "Where are the beautiful moments, the joys and pleasures of the time when he first plighted me his troth?" But in the agitated "allegro" section that concludes the scene she expresses the fervent hope that, ungrateful though it may be, his heart will soon return to her.

● SIDE TWO

Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major, K. 218
Band 1/First Movement: Allegro (8:02)
Band 2/Second Movement: Andante cantabile (6:20)
Band 3/Third Movement: Rondeau—Andante grazioso; Allegro ma non troppo (6:41)
Jascha Heifetz, violinist;
New Symphony Orchestra of London;
Sir Malcolm Sargent, conductor

There is no more convincing proof of the early ripening of Mozart's genius than the five violin concertos he wrote in 1775, when he was 19. The concertos seem to have been intended for the Salzburg court violinist Antonio Brunetti, but they may also have been meant for Mozart's own use: he was a talented violinist in his own right. In fact, his father thought that he should pay more attention to the instrument. "If only you would do yourself justice, and play with boldness, spirit, and fire, you would be the first violinist in Europe," Leopold wrote to his son. But Mozart preferred to concentrate on the piano: the concertos of 1775 are the only ones he is definitely known to have written for the violin.

The D Major Concerto, K. 218, offers a brilliant example of Mozart's ability to pour passionately lyrical music into the mold of the light, gay rococo concerto. The opening movement begins with a theme introduced by the orchestra that has the character of a military bugle call. The solo violin makes its first entrance with this same theme. The ensuing dialogue between violin and orchestra often takes on the character of an operatic duet, and there is a coloratura cadenza for unaccompanied violin just before the movement comes to a close. The second movement is an extended melodic reverie. In the course of this song-like outpouring the solo violinist plays almost without interruption, and here again there is a short unaccompanied cadenza. The third movement is cast in the form of a rondeau, whose witty opening theme recurs between various contrasting melodies. Mozart used the French spelling for rondo, perhaps because one of the elements in this succession of melodies—the musette, or bagpipe, theme—is taken from a folk dance associated with the town of Strasbourg in France. Mozart himself referred to the concerto as his "Strasbourg" concerto.

● SIDE THREE

Piano Sonata No. 10 in C Major, K. 330

Band 1/First Movement: Allegro moderato (6:56)
Band 2/Second Movement: Andante cantabile (6:57)
Band 3/Third Movement: Allegretto (5:26)
Van Cliburn, pianist

This sonata was written in 1778 during Mozart's second visit to Paris and was presumably intended to demonstrate his remarkable gifts as the most expressive of 18th Century pianists. From all accounts his keyboard performances always had something magical about them. According to a writer who heard the 10-year-old Mozart play in Switzerland, the boy seemed to be "the instrument in the hands of music." In later years his playing became still more poetic. "His whole countenance would change," wrote one observer, "emotion spoke from every movement of his muscles, and was communicated by a sort of intuitive sympathy to his audience."

The C Major Sonata conforms to the 18th Century conception of form and balance in the keyboard sonata. The first movement is distinguished by its light-fingered texture and the simplicity of its harmonic patterns. Only in its central, so-called "development" section does Mozart wander off the straight and narrow harmonic path to explore some unexpected chromatic byways. The slow, second movement is a sinuous and song-like flow of melody with a middle section in minor that is profoundly pensive. The third and final movement reverts to the carefree mood of the first. Its vivacious melodies have a cheerful simplicity that suggests Mozart may have found their origins in folk tunes.

Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331
Band 4/Third Movement: Alla Turca—Allegretto (3:51)
Van Cliburn, pianist

The last, *Alla Turca*, movement of the A Major Sonata, K. 331, is also the product of Mozart's 1778 visit to Paris. It has become one of the most famous of all his works for the piano. "Alla Turca"—"in the Turkish style"—refers to the military

band music which various European armies had copied from Turkish models. The fashion for the so-called "Janissary bands" dated from 1725, when Augustus the Strong of Saxony and Poland received a full Turkish military band as a gift from the Sultan. To maintain the balance of musical power, other major monarchs had to follow suit, and soon there were Janissary bands to be heard throughout Europe, with their characteristic sound of drums, cymbals, triangle and "Turkish crescent" or "bell-tree." Mozart, here writing for the piano, alludes not so much to the timbre of the instruments as to the quickstep rhythm of the marching band, with its strong downbeats and jangling ornamentation. The piece is in simple three-part (ABA) form, with a recurring refrain that follows each section.

● SIDE FOUR

Symphony No. 39 in E Flat Major, K. 543
Band 1/First Movement: Adagio; Allegro (8:27)
Band 2/Second Movement: Andante (7:58)
Band 3/Third Movement: Menuetto—Allegretto (3:58)
Band 4/Fourth Movement: Finale—Allegro (7:43)
Boston Symphony Orchestra; Erich Leinsdorf, conductor

Although Mozart composed more than 40 symphonies, two thirds of them were written before he reached his eighteenth birthday. In his maturity he concentrated his symphonic talents primarily on the piano concerto. But then, with a burst of energy in the summer of 1788, when he was 32 years old, Mozart produced three major symphonies, Nos. 39, 40 and 41. They were the last he was to write, and are generally conceded to be his greatest.

Why Mozart chose to write these symphonies at this time has been the subject of much speculation. He was then in financial trouble and had no immediate prospects for their performance. Possibly he composed them for a projected series of concerts the following winter, but so far as is known they were never performed in his lifetime. Perhaps, as Sacheverell Sitwell writes, Mozart was simply engaged in "a wholly gratuitous display of his powers, as much to satisfy himself as to please an audience."

Each of these last symphonies has a distinctive personality and emotional character. No. 40 is agitated and tragic in mood—it is set in the same key, G Minor, as Pamina's pathetic aria in *The Magic Flute* (Side 1, Band 3). On the other hand No. 41, with its trumpets and drums and bright key of C major, has a festive splendor akin to that of the Piano Concerto No. 21 (Side 5). The Symphony No. 39 has been called the most limpid and lyrical of the three. Mozart set it in E flat, a key whose coloration is warm and mellow, and in his orchestration he omits the usual oboes, substituting for their penetrating sound the softer-grained, more sensuous tone of the clarinets—still relatively new instruments then and not yet regular members of the symphony orchestra.

Unlike his friend Haydn, Mozart did not invariably begin his symphonies with slow introductions, and No. 39 alone among the final trio has one. It is a weighty, impressive introduction; the portentous "rapping" chords with which it begins, combined with quiet rushing scale passages, gradually build up a mood of tense expectation until a series of mysterious, shifting harmonies lead into the main body of the movement. The underlying mood, a kind of wistful serenity, is set by the opening theme of the movement, a quiet melody in the strings whose first phrase is gently echoed by the horns. But as the movement progresses there are brilliant passages for the full orchestra and it ends with the thumping of the timpani and fanfare-like pronouncements from the trumpets.

The spacious second movement is dominated by its opening theme, set in the strings—a folk-like melody whose two parts Mozart repeats in their entirety and then subjects to subtle alterations. The air of tranquillity is occasionally disturbed by outbursts of anguish, but these pass and the movement closes peacefully.

The third movement, a minuet, is not of the courtly type but a vigorous affair engaging the resources of the full orchestra. Its middle section, more lightly scored, is an almost comically rustic Austrian *ländler*, or country dance, in which the first clarinet carries the melody and the second clarinet dominates the accompaniment. The movement is then rounded off with a repeat of the opening minuet.

The final movement begins with the violins playing a restless, bubbling theme that soon expands to include the entire orchestra. The movement develops into a musical steeplechase in which the characteristic rhythm of the first theme is pursued to the finish and virtually everything that happens melodically derives from this sparkling musical idea.

● SIDE FIVE

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467
Band 1/First Movement: Allegro maestoso (14:10)
Band 2/Second Movement: Andante (7:12)
Band 3/Third Movement: Allegro vivace assai (6:29)
Géza Anda, pianist and conductor;
Vienna Symphony Orchestra

Mozart composed this concerto to perform himself in March 1785, when he gave three concerts—billed as "grand academies for his own benefit"—at the Imperial Court Theatre in Vienna. The virtuoso Mozart is very much in evidence in the solo part—the brilliant pianist who was renowned, as a friend noted, "for his feeling, the rapidity of his fingers, the great execution and strength of his left hand particularly." Mozart is known to have played this concerto with great success not only in Vienna but also in Leipzig, where it impressed the *cognoscenti* as "the most magnificent and difficult of all his known concertos." In order to protect himself from pirate publishers who worked from stolen copies of his music, Mozart played without rehearsal from a deliberately cryptic manuscript. Reported a witness: "The piano part contained nothing but a figured bass over which only the principal ideas were written out, the figures, passages, and so on only briefly sketched. He could presume to do this because he could depend upon his memory as well as his feeling."

Both in scale and character, the concerto's first movement belongs among Mozart's most majestic compositions. The trumpets and kettledrums that he adds to the orchestra here reinforce the march-like rhythm of the opening theme. Stated in unison by the strings at the beginning of the movement, this stalwart tune is answered by a fanfare of massed winds and kettledrums, and then moves to the bass, while a powerful countermelody is given out by the violins. The piano enters at last with some introductory runs, trills and flourishes. After a sudden modulation into minor, the soloist leads into a new theme, a melody, says the Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein, "of that utmost simplicity of which only great men are capable, men who possess that 'second naïveté,' which is the highest achievement of artistic and human experience." A reprise by the orchestra of the opening theme, with its military bearing, ushers in the dramatic development that follows. Here the piano is restless and impulsive; its ornamental runs flash up and down the keyboard and its harmonies grow in-

creasingly poignant in the course of its exchanges with the orchestra. A full restatement of the movement's main themes then leads to the cadenza, where Mozart permits the soloist to demonstrate his own powers of improvisation. Only the summing up remains: fanfares from the trumpets and drums help to bring the movement to a triumphal conclusion.

The slow second movement is also one of Mozart's most remarkable conceptions. Einstein says it is "like an ideal aria freed of all the limitations of the human voice." It begins with muted, second violins and violas playing throbbing triplets over plucked bass notes while the first violins (also muted) trace out a calm, long-arching melody. When the piano enters it takes over this melody and expands upon it, the strings and winds adding intensifying commentary. Profound and touching, the movement shows us the romantic side of Mozart. It is the music that the 19th Century French writer Stendhal associated with "the moments of dreamy and enchanting melancholy that you find at the end of autumn in the vicinity of an ancient castle under the long pathways of sycamores." More than a century later this same melancholia made the movement ideally appropriate for the film *Elvira Madigan*—which, in turn, contributed to a surge in the concerto's popularity. Géza Anda, incidentally, was the soloist heard in the soundtrack of the film.

The third movement is brief and brilliant. Its sparkling opening theme is announced by the strings and reinforced by, among other instruments, the drums and trumpets that remained silent in the second movement. The witty, almost mischievous exchanges that ensue between the piano and the orchestra are largely based on fragments of this theme. As in so many of the last movements of Mozart's concertos, the gaiety, surprises and jokes pungently evoke the atmosphere of one of his comic operas, such as *Così fan tutte* (Side 8).

● SIDE SIX

String Quartet No. 15 in D Minor, K. 421
Band 1/First Movement: Allegro (7:42)
Band 2/Second Movement: Andante (6:27)
Band 3/Third Movement: Menuetto—Allegretto (4:33)
Band 4/Fourth Movement: Allegretto ma non troppo (10:09)
Guarneri Quartet (Arnold Steinhardt, first violinist; John Dalley, second violinist; Michael Tree, violinist; David Soyer, cellist)

"I was there," wrote the Irish tenor Michael Kelly of one of Mozart's string-quartet parties in Vienna, "and a greater treat or a more remarkable one cannot be imagined." On that evening, according to Kelly, Franz Joseph Haydn was the first violin; the operatic composer Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf played second violin; Mozart played viola, and the Bohemian composer Jan Vanhall, a specialist in symphonies, played the cello. It was on occasions such as this that Mozart introduced the quartets he wrote partly for his own pleasure, partly as a tribute to Haydn—"my very dear friend." These tributes, six in all, were composed over a period of three years and are among the finest of Mozart's 23 string quartets. The D Minor (the only one of the set written in a minor key) is the most passionately melancholy of them all. It is one of those works in which Mozart transcends the rococo convention of music as a pattern of pleasing sounds, turning his back on 18th Century formality to venture into the unchartered regions of a subjective, utterly personal music. Compared to the Beethovenian *Sturm und Drang* which would succeed it in the next generation, this was a quiet revolution. But it is a reminder that Mozart, the embodiment of the classical spirit in music, was also the one who sounded the first unmistakably Romantic note.

The first movement is a moving dialogue among four equal partners, though the first violin usually takes the melodic lead. This instrument announces the opening theme with a dramatic downward leap that is immediately followed by an upward leap reaching even higher than the original starting point. Fragments of the theme are taken up in turn by each of the other instruments in descending order: second violin, viola and cello. The second theme is then introduced, again by the first violin, against a background of repeated notes from the second violin and viola. The entire opening section is played a second time before the movement proceeds to a complex development in which the thematic elements are transformed and expanded. The long, arching theme of the opening now recurs in new harmonic settings; the passionate trill that follows it is used again and again for emphasis, and the playful pattern of constantly repeated notes serves as both an accompaniment and a melodic device.

The second movement begins with a deceptively simple and sunny eight-bar melody. But the harmonies become tinged with melancholy as the movement progresses. In the middle section, the first violin spins out a long, curving melody over a series of chords and countermelodies in the other instruments. The elegiac mood is relieved by a return to the opening theme, but somehow the movement never recaptures the unclouded cheerfulness with which it began.

The third movement minuet is a far cry from the usual ballroom minuet as it was then danced in Viennese high society. Its widely spaced chords rise above a sinking bass line in the cello. The opening section is in two parts, both repeated before the central section provides a change of atmosphere. Here Mozart departs from the intense contrapuntal manner of the opening minuet and evokes a simple peasant dance.

The last movement consists of a theme and variations. The two-part theme (both parts are repeated) hovers ambiguously between major and minor. In the first variation, the first violin is busy subdividing the melody into a series of scale-like excursions. A rich harmonic texture and rhythmic complexity distinguish the second variation, to which the second violin contributes throbbing triplet figures. Mozart's own favorite instrument in his quartet sessions, the viola, carries the melody at the beginning of the third variation. The fourth variation presents a duet for first and second violins, with an ingenious downward-curling comment from the viola and cello. The conclusion, with its final restatement of the theme, is marked by a passionate outpouring of harmonies, climaxed by the long downward leap that began the first movement.

● SIDE SEVEN

Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622
Band 1/First Movement: Allegro (12:10)
Band 2/Second Movement: Adagio (7:08)
Band 3/Third Movement: Rondo—Allegro (8:53)
Benny Goodman, clarinetist; Boston Symphony Orchestra; Charles Munch, conductor

Mozart learned about the sensuous sonic possibilities of the solo clarinet from Anton Stadler, a clarinetist close to his own age who played in the Imperial Court Orchestra in Vienna. It was for Stadler that he wrote this concerto in October of 1791 just before he died. And it remains one of his most poetic and intimate scores.

Stadler was described by one contemporary critic as a clarinetist who could evoke a tone like the human voice, "so soft, so lovely, that no one who has a heart can resist it." It is

easy to see why Mozart should have chosen to emphasize this very "human" quality in the concerto rather than the instrument's purely virtuosic possibilities.

The opening movement is so rich in melodic invention that many of its thematic ideas are not even touched by the clarinet solo but remain, as it were, the property of the orchestra. Indeed, the whole movement, though classically structured, is one continuous outpouring of melody. The second, slow movement is an adagio in three-part (ABA) form, with much of the centerpiece written in the clarinet's *chalumeau* (low) register. The concluding movement, in rondo form, takes advantage of the clarinet's beautiful, sustained tones and its extraordinary ability to "sing" convincingly in both high and low registers, to play tightly spaced runs as well as wide melodic leaps, and to hold chamber-style dialogues with instruments like the cello and the flute.

● SIDE EIGHT

"Così Fan Tutte," K. 588
Band 1/Overture (4:15)
Band 2/Act 2—Conclusion (25:12)
Leontyne Price, soprano (Fiordiligi); Tatiana Troyanos, mezzo-soprano (Dorabella); Judith Raskin, soprano (Despina); George Shirley, tenor (Ferrando); Sherrill Milnes, baritone (Guglielmo); Ezio Flagello, bass (Don Alfonso); Ambrosian Opera Chorus, John McCarthy, director; New Philharmonia Orchestra of London; Erich Leinsdorf, conductor; Valda Aveling, harpsichord continuo

Così fan tutte is an *opera buffa* within whose framework of artificial comedy Mozart takes a realistic yet compassionate view of the relations between the sexes. In the plot, set in Naples, the cynical old bachelor Don Alfonso lays a wager with two young officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, that the much-vaunted fidelity of their fiancées is a snare and a delusion. The officers bid farewell to their sweethearts, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella, and purportedly leave for the wars, but they return disguised as wealthy Albanians. At first the two ladies angrily reject their suit, but the tide turns when the two "Albanians" pretend to take poison before their very eyes. The two suitors then proceed to win the sisters' considerably softened hearts. Guglielmo, who had been betrothed to Fiordiligi, ingratiates himself with Dorabella, and Ferrando, the fiancé of Dorabella, overcomes Fiordiligi's somewhat firmer resistance.

A double wedding is arranged, and Despina, the sisters' maid, appears in disguise as a notary. Just as the marriage contract has been signed, however, the sound of military music signals the return of the two officers. In the confusion the Albanians are hustled offstage, and they reappear as their former selves, to confront the sisters with the notarized evidence of their infidelity. Alfonso has won his point, and he now unravels the tangled romantic skein. The moral: Happy is the man who can accept life as it is.

Band 1. The brief overture begins with a mock-serious introduction that quotes (with cat-like tread in the lower strings) the second-act melody with which Alfonso makes the Albanians concede his point: "Così fan tutte" ("Women are like that"). What follows is a bubbling "presto" that conceals another musical clue: the merry little tune that is tossed about by oboe, flute and bassoon is based on a quotation from *The Marriage of Figaro*—a passage in which one of the characters sings almost identical words: "Così fan tutte le belle" ("All lovely women are like that"). This melodic fragment sparks the rest of the overture; it is Mozart's way of advertising, "Brought to you by the wonderful people who gave you *The Marriage of Figaro!*"

Band 2. This excerpt begins with the recitative in which Ferrando and Guglielmo, having won the fair ladies, pour out their perplexity and indignation at being simultaneously victorious and cuckolded. Don Alfonso's short philosophical aria does much to soothe their feelings: "Così fan tutte!" Despina then announces that the ladies are ready to marry and have ordered a contract to be drawn up. The finale that follows consists of one long succession of lyrical episodes and happenings: solos, duets, trios, quartets, sextets. Despina's wheezy voice, when she appears in notary's disguise, provides one of the farcical highlights of the scene, whose smooth unfolding is shattered by the drum roll announcing the officers' imminent return. Their arrival is a lovely study in hypocrisy: a mini-duet designed to be sung in such a way that butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. Some of the anger-music that follows suggests that disaster threatens their entente, but Alfonso wisely arranges for the four lovers to be happily reconciled—whether in the original or the Albanian combination, the libretto fails to specify.

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A Mozart Chronology

The works included in our recordings are shown in boldface.

1756 Born on January 27 at Salzburg, son of Leopold Mozart, court musician, and Anna Maria Pertl Mozart.

1760 Begins lessons on clavier with his father.

1761 Composes his first pieces: Minuet and Trio in G Major, K. 1; Andante for Piano, K. 1A.

1762 On tour with his father and sister Nannerl to Munich and Vienna. Concert appearances and compositions for piano.

1763 Begins study of the violin with his father. Goes on concert tour of German cities, Brussels and Paris.

1764 Makes concert appearances, in Paris and at court of Louis XV at Versailles. Visits London, where he plays before George III and meets J. C. Bach. Composes symphonies and sonatas.

1765 Travels from London to Holland, back to Paris and thence to Switzerland, Munich and finally home to Salzburg.

1767 Embarks on second visit to Vienna. He and Nannerl are stricken with smallpox.

1768 In Vienna, Emperor Joseph II commissions opera *La finta semplice*. First opera *Bastien und Bastienne*, K. 50, is composed and performed.

1769 *La finta semplice*, K. 51, is produced.

1770 Has a triumphal tour of Italy. *Mitridate, Re di Ponto*, K. 87, is performed in Milan.

1771 Goes on his second Italian tour. *Ascanio in Alba*, K. 111, is produced in Milan.

1772 Makes his third trip to Italy. *Lucio Silla*, K. 135, is produced in Milan.

1773 Returns from Italy to Salzburg, and thence to Vienna in search of court appointment, but in vain. Returns to Salzburg and produces String Quintet in B-flat Major, K. 174.

1774 Composes Bassoon Concerto, K. 191. Leaves for Munich in December.

1775 Opera *La finta giardiniera*, K. 196, is produced in Munich. Composes five Violin Concertos, among them the **No. 4 in D Major, K. 218.**

1776 Returns to Salzburg, where there is growing friction with his employer, the Archbishop.

1777 Goes on tour once more, this time with his mother, to Munich, Augsburg, and Mannheim, where he meets the Weber family.

1778 Has an emotional entanglement with Aloysia Weber. Finally departs for Paris, where his mother suddenly sickens and dies. Composes piano **Sonatas No. 10 in C and No. 11 in A Major, K. 330, 331.**

1779 Back in Salzburg, he accepts a position from the Archbishop.

1780 Opera *Idomeneo* is commissioned and nearly finished.

1781 *Idomeneo*, K. 366, is produced in Munich. Mozart goes to Vienna; leaves the Archbishop's service. Resides with the Weber family. He meets Haydn.

1782 *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, K. 384, is produced in Vienna. Marries Constanze Weber in August.

1783 Visits Salzburg with Constanze. Composes **String Quartet No. 15 in D Minor, K. 421,** C Minor Mass, K. 427.

1784 Joins freemasons. A son, Karl Thomas, is born in Vienna.

1785 Father Leopold comes to visit in Vienna. Mozart composes **Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467.** He dedicates six string quartets to Haydn. Commences work on **"The Marriage of Figaro."**

1786 *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492, is produced in Vienna, and in Prague, where it is a huge success.

1787 Visits Prague, where his Symphony No. 38 in D Major (*Prague*), K. 504, is performed to cheers. *Don Giovanni* is commissioned. Mozart meets the young Beethoven. Leopold Mozart dies in Salzburg. **"Don Giovanni," K. 527,** is produced in Prague. Mozart is appointed composer to the Viennese court by Joseph II.

1788 Composes three of his greatest symphonies: **No. 39 in E Flat Major,** No. 40 in G Minor and No. 41 in C Major (the *Jupiter*), K. 543, 550, 551.

1789 Goes on tour to Leipzig, Berlin, Dresden and Prague. Composes Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581. Joseph II commissions *Cosi fan tutte*.

1790 **"Cosi fan tutte," K. 588,** is produced in Vienna. Joseph II dies; his successor, Leopold, fails to appoint Mozart to his court.

1791 Despite ill health he is composing without cease: String Quintets in D Major and E Flat Major, K. 593, 614; Piano Concerto in B Flat, K. 595; **Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622.** The *Requiem* is commissioned by Count Franz von Walsegg. **"The Magic Flute," K. 620,** is produced. Mozart works feverishly, but his condition deteriorates. With the *Requiem*, K. 626, unfinished, he dies of nephritis, or uremic poisoning, on December 5, 1791.

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